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ROUND ISLAND EXPEDITION.

DEFENCE

OF

THE NAVY.

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“No person is permitted within the Territory or jurisdiction of the United States to begin, or to set on foot, or provide or prepare the means for any military expedition or enterprise, to be carried on from thence against the territory of any foreign Prince or State, or of any Colony, District or people with which the United States are at peace.”—[Extract from Laws of the U. S.]

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[From the Mobile Daily Advertiser, Sept. 18th, 1849.]

THE ROUND ISLAND EXPEDITION.---No. 1.

Several unfair and abusive editorials have appeared of late in the New Orleans Delta, touching the conduct of the officers of our Navy who are now employed to watch the movements of the band of lawless men encamped on Round Island. These articles seem to demand some notice—not because it is believed by the writer of this, that anything which he could say, or indeed which could be written by far abler pens, would have the slightest effect in teaching the Delta that *Truth* and *Justice* are virtues more seemly in a newspaper, professing as that does to be the guardian of public morals, than their opposites—*Falsehood* and *Slander*.

The public cannot fail to have seen that everything which has appeared in the columns of the Delta, in relation to the Round Island movement, has been either apologetic or vituperative. True to his instincts, when his *interests* were to be subserved—*apologetic*, when his inherent love of *detraction* was to be indulged—*vituperative*.

It is known to all in this vicinity—a knowledge, however, not gained through the columns of the Delta—that for more than a month past a large body of adventurers, varying from five to six hundred men, have been crowded on the small spot of ground called Round Island, four miles from Pascagoula; and although this point is so near to New Orleans, yet no one has seen, till within a few days back, that the Delta has given the public the slightest inkling of this mysterious assemblage? an assemblage known to be brought together for purposes of military organization, preparatory to a hostile invasion of States at peace and amity with our own. Is there a newspaper in either New Orleans or Mobile, who will deny this? Will the Delta have the mendacity and hardihood to deny it? He cannot deny it. But it is so notorious that the Delta has studiously concealed from the country at large the lawless enterprise which for six weeks has been fitting out in our waters, and that he would have connived at the departure of some eight hundred desperadoes of all nations, pretending, however, to call themselves Americans (!), to make war;

for the sake of plunder, upon a people with whom we have no cause of quarrel.

I will not pay so poor a compliment to the good sense and intelligence of my countrymen as to enter into details to prove that an unlawful military enterprise has been brewing in this vicinity, certainly for as many as six weeks, to revolutionize the provinces of friendly powers, and that Round Island is the nucleus of the Southwestern portion of the expedition.

The Delta knows this—has certain information of the fact; and yet that paper has the assurance to talk about the navy molesting *citizens* who are spending the summer for recreation on islands near the lake shore!

Has the Delta been furnished with no tidings of the doings of late on Round Island? Has he heard nothing of *brawls* which occasionally occur among these lawless men? Of the *stabblings* which have taken place there within a few days past? of the *terror* of the people on the main lest these *peaceable* men should land among them? of the unwillingness to act on the part of “courts, magistrates, marshals, constables, *posse comitati*”? and how in one instance the civil authorities of the “sovereignty of Mississippi” were *defied* when they attempted to enforce the law? Has he heard of no *murder* on Round Island? and that when the perpetrator of the murder was sent on shore at Pascagoula, in a boat from the squadron, does he not know that the civil authorities would have nothing to do with him—that no one would stand forward to enforce the law in the “sovereign State of Mississippi”? The Delta knows all this; he knows, too, that another man is considered in a dangerous state from the effects of wounds received in a brawl! Still, in the face of all this, the Delta says that the “State of Mississippi is amply able to protect its laws and deal with wrong-doers.” This assertion is untrue. The Delta knows better, and meant it for *effect*. He knows that no sheriff with any *posse* which he could muster among the sparse population of this portion of the State would dare to levy a process upon the lawless band assembled on Round Island. Any “*fifteen shilling Virginia lawyer*” might know this—he of the Delta knows it.

But why has the Delta, until recently, been so silent about this Round Island movement? Why has this sentinel who claims to occupy the highest watchtower in guarding the public morals—why is it that he is found slumbering at his post? I repeat—*why* this *significant silence*, friend Delta? Echo answers *why*?

Had the Editor of the *Delta* been content, "*for a consideration*," to remain silent in the midst of the preparations which he knows to be in progress to bring disgrace upon our country, I should have thought meanly enough of him ; but when he wantonly traduces our naval officers for faithfully trying to prevent what *some* have been paid to forward, I feel that no epithet, however harsh when applied to him, would be unmerited.

TRUTH.

P. S.—Seeing that this "*jurisconsult*" of the *Delta* may have become somewhat rusty in *the law* since his translation from "*the bar*" to the "*chair editorial*," I hope he will excuse me for giving him the legal definitions of the epithet "*vagrants*," an epithet which, when applied to his friends on Round Island, we have seen has excited his most awful ire—to say nothing of his many clumsy attempts at wit :

"VAGRANTS.—The law includes three classes of persons under the denomination of vagrants, viz: *idle and disorderly persons, rogues and vagabonds, and incorrigible rogues.*"

Will any one say—will even the *Delta* say, that the assemblage on Round Island does not legally and properly come under the head of the first class of vagrants named above ?

[From the Mobile Daily Advertiser, Sept. 19th, 1849.]

THE ROUND ISLAND EXPEDITION.—No. 2.

The officer commanding the Naval forces off Round Island has been unjustly assailed by certain newspapers of New Orleans and other places, for attempting to defeat the military expedition known to be fitting out in our waters, to invade and make war upon a nation at peace and amity with our own. Language most scurrilous and denunciatory has been applied to that officer, because he has faithfully employed the force under his command in preventing the departure of the lawless band from Round Island, upon an expedition which would have been in violation of our treaty obligations of neutrality. The most exaggerated statements have gone forth from certain journals in New Orleans, to induce the public to believe that

the navy has wantonly and audaciously interfered with the private rights of our *citizens*, and trampled upon the laws of a sovereign State of this Union. One newspaper has been mendacious enough to ascribe the murder or murders on Round Island to the embargo laid upon provisions intended for their consumption, when the Editor well knew, at the time of making the charge, that not a single pound of provisions had ever been turned away from the island! It is true that in the "summons" issued by Commander Randolph to the people on Round Island, an embargo on provisions was threatened, but it is *not* true that the threat was ever enforced.

Before the summons was enforced, that officer was induced to doubt the legality and propriety of cutting off supplies intended for the Round Island band, and he at once forbid its enforcement; and, more than that, hearing that their *commissariat* had either been delinquent, or was unable to provide food for the band, and that they were starving, Commander Randolph immediately ordered two days' meat and bread to be sent to them from the schooner *Flirt*—which was accordingly done.

All this was known to the New Orleans Delta, for according to his own admission he keeps a reporter constantly on Round Island. But, to return to the expedition. The really discreet and respectable portion of our citizens—the men of cool heads and sound principles, cannot surely blame the navy for the part which it has taken in endeavoring to break up and disperse the Round Island rabble. These people should never be allowed to leave our waters upon their lawless, bucaneer expedition. They are ready to go anywhere, and do almost anything. Their officers have not a spark of chivalry among them; two-thirds of their rank and file are not Americans—many of them pauper foreigners—and not a few of them, it is believed, are reckless desperadoes who could be hired to do anything.

How preposterous to compare such a band with the heroes who assisted us in achieving our independence! And yet this comparison has been made by a New Orleans Editor.

All good men would be glad to know that Cuba had emancipated herself from Spanish tyranny and oppression, but who would not blush to contribute in bringing about so desirable an end even, in the manner indicated by the New Orleans Delta? To permit a military expedition to leave our waters, and especially one composed of such materials as the Round Island adventurers, would be an indelible

stigma upon our country's escutcheon. What patriot would be willing to have his country represented by such an assemblage? Who but interested editors of newspapers would have the effrontery to say that the Round Islanders are not a band of "*vagrants*?" In the opinion of all reflecting persons it would be "a burning, an eternal shame," (to quote the Delta's words) to allow an expedition so gotten up, and composed of such materials, to leave our coast. It would be an enterprize for purposes of rapine and plunder. Who doubts this? Will the unscrupulous Delta pretend that his Round Island friends could not be *hired* to march into Yucatan to assist the Indians in massacring the Spanish population—although some of this very band on Round Island, with their Colonel at their head, were once *hired* to butcher the poor oppressed and enslaved Indians, and *did* butcher them in a manner too merciless and horrible to relate?

Shame upon such *Hessian* expeditions! and worse shame upon the hired persons who countenance and uphold them! The bucaneer exploits of Anson and Drake were chivalric compared with what is now in agitation.

The navy, doubtless, was sent to Round Island to defeat the expedition by a recourse to all lawful and proper means. It is idle to say that the "sovereign State of Mississippi," with her sparse seaboard population, "is abundantly able to enforce her own laws." Before acting at all in the matter, the Commander of the naval squadron mingled with the inhabitants of Pascagoula and conversed with them freely about affairs on Round Island, and they all united in declaring that they were a lawless assemblage—that they had resisted the civil authorities in one instance—and that the civil officers were afraid to complain of them? And what greater confirmation could be given of the truth of these statements than what occurred two days afterwards? A man was killed in a *brawl* on Round Island—was buried without an inquest, and another was dangerously wounded by the same individual. The slayer was instantly seized by an officer of the navy, taken to Pascagoula to be delivered up to the civil magistrates, *but no one would act*, and the murderer was allowed in open day to take the mail steamer to the city of New-Orleans!

What becomes now of the Delta's grandiloquence? evidently intended for a powerful appeal to the sovereign State of Mississippi to avenge herself, seeing that her soil has been desecrated, her laws trampled under foot, and her *citizens* molested in their *honest* callings!



What next may we expect from this Proteus of the Delta? Successively newspaper critic, wit, "*jurisconsult*," mouthing patriot, champion of State rights, *vagrants'* rights, and all sorts of rights—and who, lastly, absolutely overwhelms us with rhetorical flourishes and *Burkeian* apostrophes.

"Ye gods! upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed,
That he is grown so great?"

TRUTH.

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